



National Association of Social Workers / Connecticut

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**Testimony Regarding SBs 851 852 and 27**

Public Hearing February 14th, 2013

Respectfully Submitted by: Ashley Williams, BSW; MSW Intern, NASW/CT

Good morning members of the committee. My name is Ashley Williams and I am a graduate student at UConn, pursuing my Master's degree in Social Work. I am the MSW intern at the Connecticut Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers and I am here today to represent NASW/CT's position on Senate Bills 851, 852 and 27.

NASW/CT strongly supports SB 851 because it empowers Connecticut's aging population to remain in the communities of their choice. Increasing the amount of assets that the spouse of an institutionalized Medicaid recipient may keep would allow them to stay in their communities. Why should we punish people when their spouse becomes institutionalized due to health and aging concerns? Just because someone's spouse is unable to live at home any longer does not mean that we should make the non-institutionalized person live a life of poverty by diminishing the number of assets they can keep.

We also strongly support SB 852, which would give DSS the resources to identify nursing homes that are in danger of going under. Allowing DSS to help eligible residents move out of that closing nursing home and into a community based setting is something NASW/CT sees as vital to the well-being and independence of Connecticut's aging population.

NASW/CT also supports SB 27 with great favor as we represent over 3,200 social workers in Connecticut who work with poverty stricken TANF recipients on a daily basis. Many TANF recipients are modestly educated and find it increasingly difficult to find jobs that are life sustaining. In today's economy, finding a job with a college education is difficult so we cannot expect people without a high school education to find a job that can help lift them out of poverty. The working regulations of Jobs First Recipients are hindering them rather than helping them because they are staying in the hole of poverty and can't find their way out. Allowing JFES recipients to increase the number of hours they may spend on education as part of approved work activities would be incredibly beneficial to the recipients because education is an empowering tool and leads us down paths that we never thought we could make it down.

As social workers, it is our responsibility to keep vulnerable populations feeling empowered and SBs 851, 852 and 27 would give us the opportunity to do just that. All populations in Connecticut deserve to be independent and heard when it comes to decisions about their lives and for this reason, NASW/CT respectfully asks that you vote these three bills favorably out of committee.

Thank you very much for your time.

